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(Vacation Issue)

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ISSUE JULY 1984

July's meeting hasn't happened yet, but as the summer months often lead to a reduced level of activity for computer hobbyists, we're publishing early and light. That is, there isn't admittedly much meat in this "vacation" issue of LISTing. You can consider this a plea for more articles and programs for publication in LISTing, as well. (Even if your program is undocumented now, our editorial staff is willing and eager to assist you in drafting the instructions, etc.).

Though the editorial content is low, one very important item is included in this month's newsletter; the members questionnaire. Please take the time to fill this out and either bring or mail it to me before the next meeting. We will create a member file which can be readily accessed to find other members with the same hardware, software, when you have a problem with yours. (As an example, Lando L's Firstloadr had a 126 where a 128 should have been, Hard to see on the screen. We did a quick compare of bytes after loading NAZIR's and found the miskey, automatically, in about 3 minutes). Best yet, would be for someone to volunteer to enter the data into a PRO/FILE database. A listing of members is already available in TS 1000 format and a complete file could be circulated among all members.

If privacy is a problem for you, by the way, simply enter a distinguishing 3 character code for yourself on the form. We'll only list the code in the database and assign someone to act as security screen for inquiries. That way, copies of the tape would be useless to outsiders.

We've found a crude, but effective fix for the logon procedure problems with Compuserve. Using Byte-Back's Z-Comm, reconfigure your conversational mode to LOCAL-ECHO-ON. In this mode, you will see what you type, and immediately following it, Compuserve echoes. Since most of your entries are one character menu selections, this should not be too disconcerting. If it is, then do this:

1. Load Z-COMM and turn on Local echo
2. Call Compuserve in the normal way (does anyone know of a number closer than Hicksville?)
3. Enter Control (graphics) 6
4. When asked for your User I.D., type it in the usual way. Note, however, that Compuserve will echo each keystroke. Thus, if your I.D. is 066770-502, as you type each digit it will be duplicated (if the link is working) and you will see:

USER -I.D.: 006666777700--550022

5. Now when asked for your password, you will see the characters you type (but not the echo, as Compuserve doesn't send these for Password) and know if you have keyed it in correctly.
6. After you get to the first screen, enter a graphic "0" to return to the main Z-Comm menu.
7. Reconfigure your system to Local Echo-off.
8. Enter Conversational mode, Compuserve is waiting for you and you will now see only their echo (and not your original keystroke) on the screen.

Some final notes, don't use "S" when a long list (like the index) is coming up. You'll have to page through the whole thing. Also, if you do lose your connection, call Compuserve back and log off (BYE), immediately. Otherwise you may be billed for up to 15 minutes connect time before the computer realizes you've gone.

A late note on Transylvania Tower; Nazir sent me a list of the variables used in the Spectrum. Sure enough those new ones in the 2068 (described last month) don't exist for that machine in the same way they do for ours.

GADGET - FREAKS

In addition to the good buys on Timex, listed in previous issues, you might be interested in:

Mattel Intellivision With Burger time - \$29.95
at Job Lot Trading 38th & 5th Avenue
Starpath Supercharger for ATARI 2600 - (has
3-1M 6116 chips) TOYS-R-US \$9.97
Kid-Vid voice module by Coleco for ATARI 1600
(tape recorder, 3 cassettes & cartridge) - Toys-R-US \$19.95
Sony LNX60 tapes 10 for \$6.90 - Camera World
& Sound - 33rd & 6th
Casto Becker TV - \$94 Montgomery Grant - Penn Station

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BOOK REVIEWS

Though you may have trouble finding them in your local bookstore, there are quite a few books available on the TS 2068. In fact, two of the books described below were found at the main branch of the NYCPL. LISTED in order of increasing value, here are three books on the 2068:

- 1) Timex Sinclair 2068: Beginner/Intermediate Guide by Fred Blechman from Howard Sams, 4300 West 62nd St., Indianapolis, Ind., 462.68 Price \$9.95. "Beginners Guide" might be a better title for this 262 page spiral bound work. The book consists of 17 Chapters and 4 appendices and is written in a somewhat offhand, chatty style. As an example, after the first introductory chapters we are presented with this little gem;

"(Now that you) have been exposed to vicious jungle mosquito 'bytes' and have a touch of mega - byte malaria..." Here is an example of a totally worthless piece of prose. There are many such, scattered throughout the book.

The first section consists of 3 chapters and gives the very basic set up and programming information, already covered adequately in the manual. Section B (chapter 4-7) continues with more information covered (perhaps better) in the 2068 manual.

Chapter 8 through 10 comprise section C, the Graphic section. A nice feature here, is the inclusion of 8 actual photos of 2068 graphics. A couple of simple UDG's (User Defined Graphics) characters are defined and a good piano music program is introduced. The Draw and Plot commands are covered at least as well as in the manual and several examples are given for using Low - res graphics.

The last chapters of the book give "Practical Programs". I'll simply list these and let you decide how practical they are:

- a) Toll totalizer (Keeps track of your telephone toll charges)
- b) Biorhythms (15 pages!)
- c) Banner - uses Plot to print big Characters
- d) Solar Collector Evaluator
- e) Music Maker
- f) Long Distance Navigator

Beginners Guide might be helpful if you have gotten a 2068 without the manual, but I really can't recommend it, even at \$9.95. I give it a 6 out of 10 at that price. This is quite a surprise coming from Howard Sams and while still not at the kind of quality level one expects of TAB books, not much better.

- 2) The TS 2068 Explored, by Tim Hartwell, John Wiley and Sons, Wiley Press, 605 Third Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10158. \$12.95

A short step up from Sams "Beginners Guide", "Explored" is a 182 page paperback consisting of 9 Chapters and 3 appendices. It is also obviously a rewrite of a Spectrum book. The pages are large and the listings all legible.

Chapter 1 gets us started and, rather than dwelling on matters already presented in the manual, gets right down to business by illustrating a simple little "ROCK, PAPER, SCISSORS" program.

Color and the special print commands (BRIGHT, FLASH) are discussed next and the examples given lead up to Kaleidoscope displays which are attractive and educational.

Since the Spectrum doesn't have Sound, we've forced to use BEEP commands only, to set up a piano program and simulate phasor fire. Chapter 3 does a reasonable job of expanding on the manual here.

Business programs offered in chapter 4 include a Telephone Directory and personal accounts, among others. Good examples of programming techniques, but as with so many others (e.g., checkbook program) not really much easier on computer than by hand.

Chapter 5 demonstrates the use of the 2068 in education. Math drills and

counting exercises are presented as well as a "Quizzer" program which lets you design your own multiple guess quizzes.

Finally, we get to what most people see computers doing first - playing games, in chapter 6. Simple BASIC (with graphics) versions of Jackman (Pacman), Nightfall (Scramble), Spawn (Life) and Breakout are provided. Again, these are relatively short (less than 3 pages of listings) and simple, but demonstrate many good sound and/or movement techniques.

Chapter seven provides a good background in 3-D graphics and the programs there offer some very good concepts. Quality is not up to VT-3D, but then, that program lists for twice the price of this entire book.

A cursory look at machine code programming, with no practical examples, is given in Chapter 8, and Chapter 9 gives miscellaneous tips. I rate "Explored" a 6 out of 10 at its \$12.95 list price. A lower price would give more value for money.

- 3) 50 Programs for the Timex Sinclair 2068 (What can you do with it), Roger Valentine. John Wiley and Sons, 605 Third Avenue, N.Y. 10158, \$12.95.

The shortest book (118 pages - 10 Chapters) in this series of reviews, 50 Programs is also the most useful. Mr. Valentine starts off assuming you have a copy of the TS 2068 (actually this looks like another Spectrum rewrite) manual and goes from there.

The very first chapter addresses the more arcane graphics techniques: Big Characters and ATTRIBUTE tables, and upside down characters. A software real time clock is also provided.

Some simple BASIC games are covered in Chapter 2, and Chapter 3 gives an example of a Word Processing program (not many features, but you'll get the idea), calculator (most people have these by now, don't they!) program and the "inevitable" Biorhythm program.

Practical computing matters are the subjects of the next two Chapters as programs to renumber, store screen pages and scroll left and right are given along with memory and program "reader" routines. These last let you look at a program and its variables as they exist as code inside your computers memory. This can be a valuable debugging and design aid.

Chapter seven continues this series of practical routines with a subroutine to allow "input" anywhere on the screen and one to format numerical data (e.g., align decimal points). Art and sound using low-res graphics and the BEEP command take up most of chapter 8, while chapter 9 gives a nice sketchpad program using the numeric arrow keys (not the joystick). Finally, Chapter 10 offers a series of diverting "space" arcade games.

50 programs gets an 8 out of 10 on my scale. The number of practical routines and useful programming tips presented help to offset the lack of screen displays and an index. Still basically a Spectrum book, "50 programs" is a reasonable choice for your second book on the 2068.

LAST MINUTE NOTES

1. A Map to 9 Dartmoor is attached
2. Heinz will have is oscilloscope and audio measuring equipment set up. Bring your tape recorder and some tapes (especially any you've had trouble with) and we'll take a look at the waveforms your machine is putting out.